

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

1. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 9 as follows:

According to a first aspect of the present invention, in view of the above, there is provided a content usage control method/apparatus for controlling use of a content under a predetermined condition, comprising acquisition step/means for acquiring identification information of another an apparatus or user requesting use of a content, registration step/means for registering the identification information acquired from the other apparatus or user, and usage control step/means for, in response to the request for use of the content issued by the other apparatus or user, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the identification information of the other apparatus or user is already registered.

2. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 9 as follows:

In the registration step/means, registration may be performed in response to a request issued by another the apparatus or user.

3. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 19 as follows:

In the registration step/means, an invalidation flag for controlling provision of a service to a client whose identification information is already registered may be stored together with identification information of another the apparatus or user, and in the usage limiting step/means, the use of the content by the other apparatus or user may be limited, if the invalidation flag associated with the other apparatus or the user is set.

4. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 6 as follows:

If it is allowed to change, without any limit, the content of registration described in the registration information database, there is a possibility that contents are distributed or provided to the outside of home (against copyright protection). In the content usage control method/apparatus according to the present invention, to avoid the above problem, limitation is imposed on rewriting of identification information registered in the registration information database. That is, identification information of an apparatus or a user having permission to receive a service is allowed to be replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or another user within a predetermined limitation.

5. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 10 as follows:

In the change limiting step/means, the number of times already registered identification information is replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or user may be limited to a predetermined value. If replacement is performed the predetermined number of times, no further replacement is allowed. The data indicating the allowable number of times rewriting of registration information is performed may be protected so that the data cannot be tampered with by an end user.

6. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 19 as follows:

In the change limiting step/means, the frequency at which already registered identification information is replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or user may be limited. For example, if registration information is changed, further changing of registration information is inhibited until a predetermined period of time elapses. Alternatively, the maximum allowable number of times registration

information is changed within a predetermined period of time may be limited to a particular value.

7. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 4 as follows:

The change limiting step/means may include, when already registered identification information is replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or user, requesting the other apparatus or user to perform a particular operation. For example, inputting of a password or pressing of a particular button (for example, pressing a plurality of buttons in a predetermined order) is requested.

8. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 11 as follows:

The change limiting step/means may include, when already registered identification information is replaced, requesting submission of change permission information from another a different apparatus or a manager. For example, a password or a key data is acquired via a telephone, the Internet, a postal mail, or a storage medium or via voice, and changing of limitation is enabled when it is directly or indirectly determined that permission is granted.

9. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 22 as follows:

The change limiting step/means may include, when the limitation on registration is changed, requesting submission of change permission information from another a different or a particular manager. For example, a password or a key data is acquired via a telephone, the Internet, a postal mail, or a storage medium or via voice, and changing of limitation is enabled when it is directly or indirectly determined that permission is granted.

10. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 11 as follows:

According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a computer program described in a computer-readable format, for causing a computer system to execute a process of controlling use of a content under a predetermined condition, the process comprising the steps of acquiring identification information of another an apparatus or user requesting use of a content, registering the identification information acquired from the other apparatus or the user, and in response to the request for use of the content issued by the other apparatus or the user, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the identification information of the other apparatus or the user is already registered.

11. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 17 as follows:

Fig. 2 is a diagram showing a registration process sequence in which the content usage control apparatus (server) performs registration in response to a request from another an apparatus or user (client);

12. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 23 as follows:

Fig. 4 is a diagram showing an operation sequence in which another an apparatus or user (client) issues a request for service to the content usage control apparatus serving as a server.

13. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 14 as follows:

Fig. 9 is a schematic diagram of a content usage control apparatus modified so as to have the capability of limiting the frequency at which registered identification information is replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or user;

14. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 16, line 6 as follows:

The CD/DVD read/write drive is used to access data recording surface of a removable storage medium such as a CD-ROM disk, a CD-R disk, or a DVD disk mounted thereon. The removable storage medium is mainly used to store backup data of a software program or a data file in a computer readable format or to transfer such a software program or a data file between systems (for the purpose of selling, distributing, or providing the software program or the data file). For example, the removable storage medium can be used to physically deliver or distribute the content usage control program for controlling provision (transmission or distribution) of contents under a predetermined usage condition and/or for controlling registration or change of registration of a client to which to provide contents. The removable storage medium may also be used to exchange, with ~~another~~ an apparatus, contents to be provided and/or information associated with clients to which to provide the contents, wherein registration of clients and changing of registration of clients are performed by the content usage control program.

15. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 17, line 1 as follows:

An output unit 103 includes a user output device (not shown) such as a display, a speaker, and/or a printer and a communication interface for transmitting information such as content data to ~~another~~ an apparatus. The output unit 103 is used to provide a particular service such as provision of a content to ~~another~~ an apparatus (client) or a user. The output unit 103 may be used to also display information indicating that a request for registration of ~~another~~ an apparatus or user to which to provide contents or a

request for provision of a particular service cannot be accepted, if the request should be rejected.

16. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 17, line 12 as follows:

An input unit 104 is used to receive a registration request or a request for provision of a particular service issued by another an apparatus (client) or a user. The input unit 104 is also used to acquire identification information of another the apparatus or user. An operation of changing registration or changing limitation on registration is also performed via the input unit 104. The input unit 104 includes a communication interface, a user input device (not shown) such as a keyboard or a mouse, a switch, a sensor, and/or a camera, for receiving a user request or identification information.

17. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 17, line 23 as follows:

The communication interface may be used to download, into the apparatus 100, the content usage control program for controlling provision (transmission or distribution) of contents under a predetermined usage condition and/or for controlling registration or change of registration of a client to which to provide contents. The communication interface may also be used to exchange, with another an apparatus, information associated with clients to which to provide the contents, wherein registration of clients and changing of registration of clients are performed by the content usage control program.

18. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 9 as follows:

A specific example of the content usage control apparatus 100 shown in Fig. 1 is a personal computer compatible with the IBM PCIAT (Personal Computer/Advanced Technology) or a personal computer of a graded-up version thereof. As a matter of

course, a computer based on another architecture may also be used as the content usage control apparatus 100 according to the present embodiment. Another specific example of the content usage control apparatus 100 is a broadcast receiver having a hard disk drive. In this case, the content usage control apparatus 100 itself has the capability of storing a content and supplying the content to another an apparatus or user.

19. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 18, line 21 as follows:

When another an apparatus or user wants to receive a particular service from the content usage control apparatus 100, the other apparatus or user first requests the apparatus 100 to register identification information of the other apparatus or the user. In response to receiving the request, the content usage control apparatus 100 determines whether the identification information can be registered without contravening the rule about the maximum allowable number of registrations or the maximum allowable number of times registration is changed. If it is determined that the identification information is allowed to be registered, the content usage control apparatus 100 registers the identification information. By limiting the maximum allowable number of registrations or the maximum allowable number of times registration is changed, it becomes possible to prevent user registration from being freely performed or changed, thereby preventing contents from being illegally distributed.

20. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 19, line 14 as follows:

Fig. 2 shows a registration process sequence in which the content usage control apparatus (server) 100 performs registration in response to a request from another an apparatus or user (client).

21. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 21, line 6 as follows:

When another an apparatus or user wants to receive a particular service from the content usage control apparatus 100, the other apparatus or the user issues a request for the service to the apparatus 100. In response, the content usage control apparatus 100 determines whether the identification information of the apparatus or the user requesting the provision of the content is already registered. If it is determined that the identification information is registered, the content usage control apparatus 100 provides the requested service. However, the identification information is not registered, the service is not provided.

22. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 21, line 18 as follows:

Fig. 4 shows an operation sequence in which another an apparatus or user (client) issues a request for service to the content usage control apparatus 100 serving as a server.

23. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 25, line 2 as follows:

If it is allowed to change, with no limit, the content of registration described in the registration information database, there is a possibility that contents are distributed or provided to the outside of home (against copyright protection). In the content usage control apparatus 100 according to the present embodiment, to avoid the above problem, limitation is imposed on rewriting of identification information registered in the registration information database. That is, an apparatus or user having permission to receive a service is allowed to be replaced with another a different apparatus or user only within a predetermined limit. Specific examples of methods of limiting rewriting of identification information are described below.

24. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 25, line 16 as follows:

The number of times registered identification information is replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or user is limited to a predetermined value. If replacement is performed the predetermined number of times, no further replacement is allowed.

25. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 27, line 14 as follows:

A limit is imposed on the frequency at which identification information is replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or user.

26. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 27, line 16 as follows:

Fig. 9 shows a content usage control apparatus 100 modified so as to have the capability of limiting the frequency at which registered identification information is replaced with identification information of another a different apparatus or user. As shown in Fig. 9, the content usage control apparatus 100 is similar to that shown in Fig. 1 except that it additionally includes a timer 105 for counting the elapse of time. Alternatively, instead of including the timer 105, the content usage control apparatus 100 may include a mechanism of acquiring time information from another a different apparatus (not shown) via the input unit 104.

27. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 37, line 17 as follows:

Provision of a particular service to another an apparatus user whose identification information is already registered is controlled without changing the registration information.